

HR CONNECTIONS

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Department of Human Resources



Welcome to the December 2009 edition of HR Connections. During this period between Thanksgiving and the New Year it is critically important that we take time out of our extraordinarily busy schedules (both work and personal) to reflect upon and acknowledge the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us. The past 18-24 months has been one of the most challenging economic periods in our nation's history. Housing foreclosures, escalating unemployment, reduced access to affordable health care and other challenges have made many of us increasingly more cognizant of the fact that things we often take for granted are not readily attainable for many throughout our nation.

As revenue and other resources decline the social services needs and the number of persons in need of assistance typically increase.

I commend the dedicated professionals and service providers throughout City government who, through their hard work, ingenuity and creativity, continue to ensure the highest level of customer service delivery in the face of significantly reduced fiscal resources. I further commend those who contribute so generously to address the needs of others through the various federations and charities affiliated with the combined charitable campaign. Thank you for continuing to bless others as you are blessed.

Have a Happy, Healthy, and Safe Holiday.

**Chester C. Christie,
Director, Human Resources**

Watch the front page of the intranet for more details on the 2010 Employee Recognition Ceremony

The annual ceremony will recognize all employees who have 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 years of continuous service as of December 31, 2009. Invitations will be sent to employees who have celebrated their above listed years of service anniversary during 2009. The ceremony will also recognize employees who embrace the City's "Get Green" initiative, along with those who are nominated for the Mayor's Award of Excellence, those who strive to improve our occupational safety, and individuals who make cost saving suggestions that are implemented by the City of Columbus.

These are all individuals who definitely deserve to be recognized for their efforts. Maybe you have a cost saving idea yourself or perhaps you know of an employee or group of employees who strive to improve the City's occupational safety program, maybe they embrace the City's "Get Green" initiatives, or their work ethic emulates someone who deserves to be nominated for a Mayor's Award of Excellence; then now's your chance to get or give the recognition that is deserved. Submit your idea or nominate an outstanding employee or group of employees by January 31, 2010. Nomination forms can be found on the front page of the Intranet, on the HR homepage or with your HR personnel.



Mayor Michael B. Coleman

December 17, 2009

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Consider This

"Holiday gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect."

2009 Combined Charitable Campaign

Together we can make a difference, one contribution at a time!

Each year, employees join hand in hand to enhance the quality of life for our community through the Combined Charitable Campaign. In 2009, this effort continues to be critical, as our community and nation face difficult times. Together we are there for our families in need and in 2009 we have an opportunity to do more to serve our community through our gifts of support. Please join us in giving. There's still time to donate to your favorite charitable organizations. If you have not already submitted your contribution, please see your Combined Charitable Campaign coordinator. No contribution is too big or too small.

Reduce your Chances of Becoming an Identity Theft Victim

General Information

The links below offer general information about identity theft, how to avoid it, and what to do if you suspect your identity has been compromised.

Federal Trade Commission

- To report identity theft www.consumer.gov/idtheft
- 1.877.ID THEFT (toll free)

Identity Theft Organization

www.identitytheft.org

Federal Trade Commission

www.ftc.gov/idtheft

Social Security

www.ssa.gov

Looks too Good To Be True

www.lookstogoodtobetrue.com

Account Fraud

Become the first line of defense against account fraud. Information about fraud is available from:

The National Check Fraud Center at www.ckfraud.org or 843-571-2143.

Credit Reporting Agencies

It's a good idea to check your credit report periodically. Starting in 2005 as a provision of the Fair and Accurate Transactions Act (FACT Act) Ohioans can get a free copy of their credit report every year. Here is the contact information:

Experian

888.EXPERIAN

www.experian.com

Equifax

800.685.1111

www.equifax.com

TransUnion

800.888.4213

www.transunion.com

Internet Fraud

Internet "phishing" scams are one of the fastest growing frauds today. Phishing typically involves a bogus e-mail message that uses legitimate materials, such as credit union or other organization's website graphics and logos-- the "look and feel" --in an attempt to entice e-mail recipients to provide personal financial details, such as account information, credit card and Social Security numbers.

Take some simple precautions:

- Never respond to an unsolicited e-mail that asks for personal financial information.
- Report anything suspicious to the proper authorities. Alert the credit union or government agency identified in the suspect e-mail through a web address or telephone number that you know is legitimate. Contact the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov --a partnership between the FBI and the National White Collar Crime Center --if you think you have received a phishing e-mail or have been directed to a phishy-looking website.



Surprising Reasons to Eat Less Meat

- ***Save the rain forest*** According to the United Nations, 70% of forests in the Amazon basin have been cut down to raise cows. World Wildlife Fund estimates that every year, an area of the world's rain forests larger than the state of New York is destroyed to create grazing land.
- ***Save water*** It takes 600 gallons of water to produce one hamburger patty. Yes, just one patty.
- ***Keep water clean*** Two-thirds of beef cattle raised in the U.S. are fattened up using hormones like steroids, testosterone and progesterone. When the cows urinate, they can pollute surface and ground water with these chemicals.
- ***Stop climate change*** Hamburgers are the Hummers of food when it comes to climate change. Switching from steak to salad could cut as much carbon as leaving your car home a couple days a week. Food is the third largest contributor to the average household's carbon footprint after driving and utilities.
- ***Live longer*** Eating a lot of meat can increase the likelihood of heart attacks and high blood pressure.
- ***Save money*** Meat is usually the most expensive item in your shopping cart. Buy less meat and shift the savings to fruits and vegetables.
- ***Feed more people*** It takes about 2 pounds of grain to produce a quarter-pound of burger meat. This grain could be converted into food that more people could eat.
- ***Refresh the air*** About 1.4 billion metric tons of manure are produced by U.S. farm animals every year - 130 times the quantity produced by people.

Visit www.thedailygreen.com for more information

Making a New Year's Resolution

The start of the new year has always been a time to look back to the past, and more importantly, forward to the coming year. It is a time to reflect on the changes we want and need to make.

- ***Describe your resolutions in specific terms.*** Instead of "I don't want to be lazy", opt for "I want to exercise regularly" or "I will cut down on my television watching."
- ***Be realistic by setting achievable goals.***
- ***Break down large goals into smaller ones.*** For instance, commit to losing weight by resolving to join a gym and improve your eating habits.
- ***Find alternatives to a behavior that you want to change,*** and make this a part of your resolution plan. So you want to quit smoking but you smoke to relax yourself? What other forms of relaxation are available to you?

Below is a list of the top ten new year's resolutions

1. Spend more time with friends and family.
2. Exercise regularly.
3. Lose weight.
4. Quit smoking.
5. Quit drinking.
6. Enjoy life more.
7. Get out of debt.
8. Learn something new.
9. Help others.
10. Get organized.

Frequently Asked Questions about H1N1 Flu Vaccine

Who is being vaccinated?

At first, the vaccine supply has been limited, so those who are higher risk for flu and flu complications are being vaccinated first. These priority groups are:

1. pregnant women
2. children 6 months through adults 24 years of age, starting from youngest to oldest
3. caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age
4. People age 25 - 64 years with underlying medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart and kidney disease.

Healthcare workers



No shortage is expected, so everyone should eventually be able to get the H1N1 flu vaccine. Please visit www.ColumbusPandemicFlu.org for clinic locations and who is currently eligible for a particular clinic listed on the website.

What types of H1N1 flu vaccine are available?

H1N1 vaccine is available as a “flu shot” or nasal spray. The H1N1 Nasal spray (made with live, weakened flu virus) should be used only in healthy people 2-49 years of age, who are not pregnant. The H1N1 “Flu Shot” (made with killed flu virus) should be used for everyone who is eligible to be vaccinated.

How far apart should the two doses be spaced?

Children 6 months – 9 years old need two doses of H1N1 flu vaccine. The first dose should be given as soon as vaccine becomes available. The second dose should be given 28 or more days after the first dose. Although there is no time limit between the doses, the sooner the second dose is given after the 28 days, the sooner the child will be protected.

Should I be vaccinated if I already had the flu?

If you were ill but do not know if you had 2009 H1N1 infection as confirmed by a RT-PCR test, you should still get vaccinated, if your doctor recommends it. If you have had H1N1 flu, as confirmed by this test, you should have some immunity against H1N1 flu and can choose not to get the H1N1 vaccine. However, getting the vaccine if you have had H1N1 is not harmful.

How much does H1N1 flu vaccine cost?

H1N1 flu vaccines will be free at public health-based clinics. Other locations such as retail pharmacies may charge a small fee (under \$15) for vaccine administration.

Are H1N1 flu vaccines safe?

H1N1 flu vaccines have a similar safety profile to seasonal flu vaccines, which have a very good safety track record. Over the years, hundreds of millions of Americans have received seasonal flu vaccines. The most common side effects following flu vaccinations are mild, such as soreness or swelling where the shot was given.

Prevent Getting and Spreading the Flu

Take steps to protect yourself and others from the flu – both seasonal flu and pandemic H1N1:

- Stay home from work, school and other activities while sick and until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.
- Cover your cough with your arm or tissue
- Wash your hands often and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60% or greater alcohol)
- Get the H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccine



Symptoms of Flu

What are the symptoms of the flu?

Flu symptoms (both regular seasonal flu and H1N1 flu) include fever, cough, sore throat, chills, runny or stuffy nose, fatigue (extreme tiredness), body aches, headache and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you get sick with flu-like symptoms this flu season, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care. Most people with H1N1 flu have had mild illness and have not needed medical care or antiviral drugs and the same is true of seasonal flu.

However, some people living with chronic medical conditions are more likely to have complications from the flu and should talk to a healthcare provider about their symptoms. Also, it's possible for healthy people to develop severe illness from the flu, so anyone concerned about their illness should consult a healthcare provider.

Emergency Warning Signs That Medical Care Is Needed

In children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

More Information about the Flu and Flu Vaccine

Contact your healthcare provider

Visit www.ColumbusPandemicFlu.org for clinic locations

Call 2-1-1 (221-2255)

Some local pharmacies will also be offering for adults and children over 12 years old.

Don't forget these 4 simple steps...

Wash
your
hands

Cover
your
cough

Stay home
if you
are sick

Get
your flu
shot

Cut Costs Corner

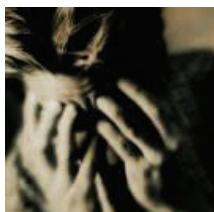
Save money this
holiday season



During the holiday season, consumers spend \$400 billion. It is easy to overspend but with a plan in place, spending in moderation can be easier than you think.

- **Sensible gift exchange with family and friends** Set a spending limit and stick to it. Have each person draw a name and buy a gift for that person rather than all your family and friends. You could also give homemade gifts, gifts of your time, or just exchange greeting cards. Remember that it is the thought that counts.
- **Take stock of what you already have before you buy** Every year, billions of dollars worth of gift cards expire or lose value so before you start your holiday shopping check to see if you have any gift cards. If you do, use them for your shopping or cash them in at plasticjungle.com for up to 90% of their value. Also, re-gift an item you already have or reuse old gift bags.
- **Make entertaining more about family and friends** Focus your time on the spirit of the season by enjoying good times with good people. Make meals a potluck so that everyone can share the costs. Host a brunch rather than dinner since brunch foods tend to cost less than dinner fare. Get together for old fashioned caroling or playing games instead of a traditional cocktail party.
- **Take time out for those in need** - Volunteering your time as a family to help those in need during the holiday season is not only the right thing to do but can be an inspiration for you to spend less. Helping those in need gives most of us a new appreciation for the blessings we already have.

Tense?
Stressed?
Worried?
Angry?



EAP can help!

EAP is a service to assist City employees and their families resolve difficulties. Call **645-6894** for more information.
Always confidential.

2010 BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

Saturday, February 6, 2010
Lincoln Theater
769 E. Long Street

The Department of Human Resources announces that the City of Columbus 2010 Black History Month Celebration will be held on Saturday, February 6 at the newly refurbished Lincoln Theater. The theme of the Celebration will be,



“Harlem’s Cotton Club revisited” and will feature the music of Duke Ellington and other jazz and blues greats. A luncheon and 1930’s fashion show is also being planned as part of the Celebration. Look for more details in the next HR Connections or contact Dr. Melvin V. Richardson, Black History Month Coordinator, at 645-8871.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

United HealthCare (Medical).....	1-800-681-3849
Claims, Pharmacy/UHC Mail Order (MEDCO), Pre-certification Optum/Nurseline.....	1-877-365-7922
United Behavioral Health.....	1-800-358-0365
Behavioral health, substance abuse, psychiatric treatments Website.....	www.myuhc.com
Delta (Dental).....	1-800-524-0149
Website.....	www.deltadentaloh.com
Vision Service Plan (Vision).....	1-800-877-7195
Website.....	www.vsp.com
United HealthCare (COBRA):.....	1-800-318-5311
Hartford: Short-Term Disability.....	1-800-752-9713
Claim Questions.....	1-866-282-8495
Filing a Claim: Contact Division of Human Resources, Risk Management at 645-8065 or Payroll	
AFLAC.....	1-800-992-3522
Deferred Compensation.....	1-877-644-6457
Deferred Compensation Website.....	www.ohio457.org
Colonial Life.....	1-800-272-5025
OPERS.....	1-800-222-7377
EAP.....	614-645-6894
City Website.....	http://www.columbus.gov
Intranet.....	http://Intranet/HumanResources

HR CONNECTIONS

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